The Alphistian System of Government
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Chapter I: Introduction

Alphistia is a constitutional republic, with a parliamentary system of government, elected by democratic means. This booklet explains Alphistia's political system, its legal system, its local government institutions, and the role of political parties.

Governments exercise power, whether democratically, in authoritarian ways, or through dictatorship. Most people alive today do not live in democracies, and democracy itself is not a very old system in practice. While it is true that practice makes perfect, even in democratic societies, there is always the danger of an

over-concentration of power, institutionalization of bureaucracy, and the development of unresponsive government. There are also the dangers of corruption and the cynical manipulation of popular opinion which undermine democracy. Not even the oldest, most powerfully democratic countries are immune to such decay from within.

In recent years, there has been growing tension between supranational institutions controlled largely by unelected economic elites worldwide, and neo-nationalist political movements that draw on an ugly historical past. Globalization by its nature is undemocratic, particularly the dictatorship of “market forces”, and the inward-looking nativist movements exploited by nationalist politicians are hardly an acceptable alternative. In a very small way, Alphistia seeks to be an antidote to such poisonous developments.

Alphistians choose their own system. They have a democratic system based on the best practices of the past and present. The chief advantage is Alphistia’s small size: a population small enough to be accountable to its citizens, through their elected representatives. Local government in particular, would allow for direct citizen participation. Economically, it participates in globalization on its own terms, to its own advantage. Socially, it develops a way of life and culture that complements its citizens’ shared values based on community, humanism, and the well-being of its people.

Chapter II: The Constitution

The Alphistian Constitution’s preamble begins:

“We are a nation, and we call our country Alphistia. We come from many lands to create a new society, and provide ourselves lives of freedom, justice, order, and prosperity.”

It is the basic law for Alphistia, prepared in advance for the nation’s use upon its founding. It is modeled on democratic constitutions of other countries, in

particular the USA, Canada, and Germany. In Alphistian, the document is known as “De Anselrit” (The First Law).

There are 72 articles in concise and clear language outlining Alphistia’s national and local government and its legal system. (Articles 1-29). The second part of the Constitution is the “Charter of Citizen’s Rights” (Articles 30-45), the third is the “Charter of Social Rights (Articles 46-60), and there is a concluding section of general administrative articles (Articles 61-72), with several concerning the separation of church and state.

The Constitution clearly states that Alphistia is a republic, with the source of power coming from elected assemblies. The primary institution of government is the national parliament, which is called the Kilrete. Elections are democratic between competing political parties, with seats in the Kilrete given to each by proportional representation. Elections must be held every four years.

A government is formed by one or more parties with at least 50% of all seats in the Kilrete. The leader of the largest party in the coalition is the leader of the government, and is called the Spor. The Spor is President and Prime Minister of Alphistia. He/she appoints a cabinet from the parties in the government, called the Stat Rad. The Stat Rad consists of all the heads of the ministries (there are 15 of them), plus the Spor.

Local assemblies in the provinces and towns (called “Samenten”) elect members in similar ways, although village councils are generally non-partisan.

The Stat Kort is the supreme court of Alphistia. Because of the country’s small size, it hears cases of national importance, as well as appeals from provincial courts. It consists of five judges, nominated by the national lawyers association, interviewed by the Spor, and confirmed by the Kilrete. Its primary role is to apply the Ritkoda (Law Code) according to constitutional principles. The Alphistian Constitution is considered to be a clear document which does not need continuous interpretation by judges as if they were oracles. Juries are not a part of the Alphistian legal system, and the death penalty and torture are forbidden.

The Charter of Citizen Rights gives each Alphistian many human rights: equality before the law without regard to race, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, or religious belief. There is freedom of speech, press, and privacy at home and in the workplace, and written and electronic correspondence is protected from government inspection except when ordered by the Stat Kort.

Citizens may protest peacefully, and if arrested for any reason, must be charged within 24 hours or be released. Citizens are not required to incriminate themselves, and defense attorneys must be available. Alphistians are free to own their own businesses, and if in need, to be provided housing by the government.

The Charter of Social Rights gives citizens the right to organize and be members of labor unions and political parties, and other organizations of civil society. Adult citizens have a right to a basic income during unemployment, disability, while studying in college, or when retired. There are guarantees for paid vacation, sick leave, maximum work hours, and a right to employment or retraining when needed. Same sex marriage is legal, and freedom to be religious (or not) is guaranteed. Articles 64-67 regulate religious institutions to guarantee separation of church and state. Divorce and abortion are legal, and women have equal rights to men. Guns are strictly regulated.

The Alphistian Constitution may be amended by the Kilrete, but any proposed changes must be approved by three fourths of its members, and confirmed by three fourths of the voters in a referendum. Non-citizens in Alphistia are treated according to international norms of human rights.

Chapter III: The Kilrete

The national parliament of Alphistia is called the Kilrete. The origin of the word is not known, but it goes back to the earliest descriptions of Alphistia in the late 1960s.

The Kilrete is unicameral, and would have 65 members (excluding the Spor). Representatives are elected for a regular term of 4 years. There is a maximum number of 3 terms for members, to encourage the idea of a citizen's parliament, and not professional politicians.

Members are chosen in a national election. Voters select a party to vote for, and are presented with candidate lists by rank for each party. The seats are apportioned by the number of votes cast for each party. However, each party that receives more than 5 percent of the total votes cast receives seats in the Kilrete. Parties below the threshold do not receive seats.

The Kilrete is the most important institution of government in Alphistia. Its members propose legislation, debates bills, and decide the law of the land, taxes, and government finances. Its sessions are open to the public and broadcast on radio. A television program summarizes debates each week.

Alphistia's government: the Stat Rad (State Council) is drawn from the members of the party/parties in the governing coalition. When a Spor is named, he/she no longer votes in the Kilrete, and the second person on that party's list takes the Spor's place in the parliament.

Bills (a bill is called a "rekord") can be introduced by any Kilrete member, the Spor, or any member of the Stat Rad. After the rekord is introduced, it is referred to a committee for study and changes. A revised rekord is then voted on by the Kilrete. If rejected, it can be referred back to the committee for further changes, and another vote is held. If the rekord is accepted by the majority, the rekord becomes "rit", or law.

The Kilrete meets for two sessions each year. The opening of the Kilrete is in February and runs through May. It meets for one day in June for the National Day, but that is ceremonial. The second session starts in early September and ends in early December.

If a governing coalition falls apart, the largest party forms a temporary minority government. The former government acts as caretaker until the next scheduled

election is held. If necessary, the Spor can be replaced with the next person on the largest party's electoral list.

Chapter IV: The Spor

The Spor is Alphistia's highest level official, elected by the voters every four years. The Spor is the member of the Kilrete whose party receives the most votes in each national election. That person no longer votes in the parliament, but heads the Stat Rad (Council of Ministers). He/she is the elected head of the government, equivalent to the prime minister in other countries. The Spor also acts as head of state, equivalent to the formal duties of a President or sovereign in other systems.

The Spor appoints members of the Stat Rad as cabinet members. These officials come from the parties included in the governing coalition. The proposed cabinet members are approved by the Kilrete as a whole at the beginning of the Spor's new government.

Alphistia does not have a system of a strong executive. An individual can serve as Spor for two four year terms. After that, parties must select another member as the top candidate on their electoral list. The Spor acts as national leader through the cabinet and the Kilrete, but is not able to issue executive orders with the force of law. The Spor is not able to veto legislation passed by the Kilrete, and does not indicate approval or disapproval of passed bills by signing or refusing to sign them. The Spor acts as the country's head diplomat in foreign relations, but cannot unilaterally order military action or recall ambassadors.

The Spor's primary duty is to formulate the government's official policies and programs and propose legislation, as well as administering the day-to-day governing of the country through the cabinet and its ministries.

If the Spor dies or resigns while in office, the second person on the largest party's list of Kilrete members becomes the Spor until the next scheduled election. In extreme circumstances, the Kirete can remove a Spor who has been indicted for criminal activity by a majority vote of all members, although this has

not happened in Alphistia's history. Elected officials in Alphistia, including the Spor, do not receive immunity from criminal investigation or prosecution.

These limits on the Spor's power reflect Alphistia's system of parliamentary governance, and is an alternative model to the strong executive role in some other systems, such as the USA or in Russia.

Chapter V: The Ministries

The Alphistian cabinet is officially known as the "Stat Rad" (State Council) but is commonly called the "Radek" (the name of the building where it meets). The cabinet consists of the Spor and the heads of each national ministry. Cabinet members are always elected Kilrete members. This is to prevent a Spor from appointing cronies as ministers, or to undermine the mission of a ministry by appointing a "fox to guard the henhouse", as is common in other political systems.

Currently there are 15 ministries: foreign affairs, defense, justice, finance, planning, industry, agriculture, social services, health, housing, environment, education, culture, transportation, and communications. Except for the minister, all other employees of the ministries are members of the civil service. These employees are not appointed by the government but hired based on the results of a written examination and personal interviews.

The largest ministry is for Social Services, which has a broad area of responsibilities, including the social security system, and many other aspects of social policy. The smallest ministries are for foreign affairs and defense, due to recent world history that has made connections with other countries less frequent, and Alphistia's geographical isolation.

Each ministry administers the programs under its portfolio, spends its portion of the national budget, and formulates proposals and sponsors research for new programs and policies.

The State Council meets each week with the Spor to assess the implementation of the government's policy. The Spor meets individually as needed with each minister for details about policy and administrative issues. Each year the Spor and the Radek formulate the national budget, which is then formally presented to the Kilrete for adoption. The Kilrete consults with the Radek for any necessary changes and then votes on the final proposed budget.

Chapter VI: The Courts

The Alphistian judicial system is based on its basic law: the Constitution, and the Ritkoda, the national legal code, which is somewhat similar to the Napoleonic code as instituted in France. Alphistia does not primarily rely on case law or precedent, as in systems derived from the British or American models.

The supreme court is called the Stat Kort (State Court) and its building is opposite the Radek on Republik Avena in Enteve. The Stat Kort consists of five judges, who serve until mandatory retirement at the age of 75 (this is true of all judges). The State Court's judges are not appointed by the Spor, cabinet, or Kilrete specifically. Instead, a candidate for a court's vacancy is proposed by the national council of lawyers, then interviewed by the Radek, including the Spor. If they agree through majority vote, the candidate is then voted on by the whole Kilrete. Judges in the lower courts are appointed by the justices of the Supreme Court. These procedures help to ensure an independent judiciary for the country.

The high court hears appeals from the lower courts and makes the final decision concerning guilt or innocence. It does not interpret the Constitution unlike in some other legal systems, since the basic law and the Ritkoda are considered very clear documents. Social issues are addressed via legislation, and in very rare instances, through revision of the Constitution, which also requires a national referendum to approve any proposed changes.

Each province has its own local courts, and conducts trials for civil and criminal cases. Juries are not a feature of the Alphistian system. In less serious cases, a single judge will preside and determine guilt or innocence. In more serious cases, there are three judge panels which issue unanimous verdicts.

Cases are brought by prosecuting attorneys (the Prokurat) after assessment of the evidence and the necessity for a trial, based on investigation and police

reports. The accused must be charged within 24 hours after arrest, and is entitled to a defense attorney to be present while under police questioning. Innocence is presumed from the time of arrest until the court decides its verdict during the trial, based on the presentation of evidence and testimony of witnesses. Financial assistance is provided to those who need help paying for defense lawyer fees.

In civil cases, the primary penalty is fines. In criminal cases, the penalty can be a fine, imprisonment, or both. There are two prisons in the country, both in rural areas, which emphasize rehabilitation instead of severe punishment. The death penalty is not used in Alphistia.

The "Lesenum Garda" (National Guard) consists of two parts: the national police, with officers and stations in each community, and the military, which maintains a small standing defense force, with a permanent officer corps and an army of volunteer soldiers.

Chapter VII: Local Government

Alphistia is divided into nine provinces: Sakazhavesa, Taveola, Dalvarne, Valeta, Morea, Opole, Branoe, Sioto, and Arden. The provinces are divided into towns and villages. The primary organ of local government is the “Samente” (meaning council). Each province, town, and village elects its own Samente.

At the village level, a local council will have a minimum of three members. Councils for smaller towns have three to seven members, while larger towns have councils with up to 11 members. Alphistia has a unified election day every four years at the national, provincial, and community level. Unlike national elections, candidates run on a non-partisan basis.

Revenue for provinces and communities comes primarily from grants from the national government. There are no local income or value added taxes. Some local revenue comes from enterprise and property taxes, but the amounts are small.

Chapter VIII: Political Parties

Alphistia is a multi-party democracy, and up to ten political parties generally contest national elections. To be represented in the Kilrete however, parties must receive more than five percent of the total votes. In general, five parties meet this requirement. Seats are given to each party based on its total percentage of the vote. If a party receives more than 50 percent of the total, it will receive at least 50 percent of the seats, and not need to form a coalition with other parties in order to form a government. However, in Alphistia's history, no party has yet achieved a majority result and coalitions have always been necessary.

The five main parties are:

Praksis (Praxis) - This has historically been the largest party in the Kilrete. It is a center-left social democratic party. It advocates state ownership of utilities, infrastructure, and natural resources, and the dominance of co-operative enterprises over private companies. It supports a fully developed welfare state, and is allied with Alphistia's trade unions, known as the Arvater Gilden.

Lesenum (Homeland) - This party generally receives the second highest number of votes. It has participated with Praksis in two unity coalition governments, and is the only party that is open to a potential coalition with the center right Frante Party. Lesenum supports a centrist political viewpoint on most issues, but in an Alphistian context. That means it is in favor of a developed welfare state, but is also supportive of private businesses participating in ownership of natural resources etc.

Pravikense (People's) - It is a left wing party that is allied with more radical trade union members and the agricultural cooperatives, as well as many students and intellectuals. It has been in coalition with Praksis in all governments since Alphistia's founding. Pravikense supports a fully cooperative economy over state ownership or private enterprise.

Verten (Greens) - This is Alphistia's Green Party. It has participated in the unity governments, but has not been in the coalitions formed after the last two elections. The Greens support a stricter application of environmental policies and the adoption of more environment friendly lifestyles by the general population.

Frante (Freedom) - This is the smallest party to regularly sit in the Kilrete, but has not been in any coalition governments, although it is open to participation with any party. It is the most right wing party in the Alphistian context, meaning it is not radically conservative or overtly nationalist. Its biggest supporters are the owners of private companies and private farmers. It is openly critical of socialist tendencies in Alphistian society, and argues for a friendlier environment for private enterprise. It supports universal social welfare programs that are not entirely state-operated and funded.

Other parties - there is a small Communist party and one for religious believers, as well as single issue parties that come and go during each election cycle. None have ever passed the minimum of five percent in total votes in any election.

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